

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-107 are pending in this case. Claims 17, 27, 37, 48, 58, 67, 95, 100, and 103 are amended and new Claims 105-107 are added by the present amendment. Amended Claims 17, 27, 37, 48, 58, 67, 95, 100, and 103 and new Claims 105-107 are supported by the original claims, and therefore add no new matter.

The outstanding Official Action objected to Claims 17, 27, 37, 48, 58, 95, and 96 for informalities. Claim 66 was rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as unpatentable over Claim 1 of Takahashi (U.S. Patent No. 6,323,963, herein "Takahashi '963"). Claim 67 was rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as unpatentable over Claim 1 of Takahashi (U.S. Patent No. 5,798,841, herein "Takahashi '841"). Claims 71-78 were rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as unpatentable over Claims 1-8 of Takahashi (U.S. Patent No. 6,281,990, herein "Takahashi '990"). However, Claim 79 was objected to as dependent on a rejected base claim, but otherwise was indicated as including allowable subject matter if re-written in independent form. Claims 1-16, 18-26, 28-36, 38-47, 49-57, 68-70, 80-94, and 97-104 are allowed.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the allowance of Claims 1-16, 18-26, 28-36, 38-47, 49-57, 68-70, 80-94, and 97-104 and the indication that Claim 79 includes allowable subject matter.

With regard to the objection to Claims 17, 27, 37, 48, 58, 95, and 96, Claims 17, 27, 37, 48, 58, and 95 are amended to correct informalities. (Claims 67, 100, and 103 are also amended to correct informalities.) No new matter is added and no new issues are believed to

be raised. Accordingly, the objection to Claims 17, 27, 37, 48, 58, 95, and 96 is believed to be overcome.

With regard to the non-statutory double patenting rejection of Claim 66 over Claim 1 of Takahashi '963, the rejection is respectfully traversed in light of the Terminal Disclaimer submitted herewith.

With regard to the non-statutory double patenting rejection of Claim 67 over Claim 1 of Takahashi '841, the rejection is respectfully traversed in light of the Terminal Disclaimer submitted herewith.

With regard to the non-statutory double patenting rejection of Claims 71-78 over Claims 1-8 of Takahashi '990, the rejection is respectfully traversed in light of the Terminal Disclaimer submitted herewith.

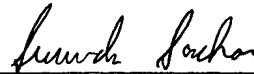
The filing of a Terminal Disclaimer to obviate a rejection based on non-statutory double patenting is not an admission of the propriety of the rejection. The "filing of a terminal disclaimer simply serves the statutory function of removing the rejection of double patenting, and raises neither a presumption nor estoppel on the merits of the rejection." *Quad Environmental Technologies Corp. v. Union Sanitary District*, 946 F.2d 870, 20 USPQ2d 1392 (Fed. Cir. 1991). Accordingly, Applicants filing of the attached Terminal Disclaimers is provided for facilitating a timely resolution to prosecution only, and should not be interpreted as an admission as to the merits of the obviated rejections.

New Claims 105-107 recite similar elements to allowed Claims 32, 42, and 53, respectively. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that new Claims 105-107 are also allowable.

Accordingly, the outstanding double patenting rejections are traversed and the pending claims are believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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